

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8179

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 276

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EEC, IR

SUBJECT: EC-IRAN

REF: A) EC BRUSSELS 541 C) DUBLIN 161

B) EC BRUSSELS 637 D) BONN 1114

1. OFFICIALS FROM TWO OF THE PERMANENT DELEGATIONS HAVE INFORMED US OF THE JANUARY 23 DISCUSSION ON AN EC-IRANIAN TRADE ARRANGEMENT IN THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (COREPER).

2. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, THE COMMISSION HAD CIRCULATED A PAPER PRIOR TO THE MEETING LISTING ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN ARRANGEMENT AND STICKING TO ITS PRIOR POSITION OF OPPOSITION TO PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS. THE COMMISSION PAPER, HOWEVER, WAS SOMEWHAT IRRELEVANT TO THE DISCUSSION. ONE SOURCE SAID THAT THERE WERE ONLY THREE FACTIONS IN THE COREPER: (A) THE DANES, THE FRENCH, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE ITALIANS FAVORED THE COMMUNITY'S CONSIDERATION OF A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT AND ASKED THAT THE ISSUE BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUT STRAIGHT AWAY TO MINISTERS; (B) THE COMMISSION,

SUPPORTED BY THE UK, SAID THAT THE ISSUE WAS NOT SO EASY, THAT MOVEMENT TO A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE UNDOING DECISIONS OF THE PAST, THAT (DESPITE REFTEL D) IT WAS NOT CLEAR THAT THE IRANIANS WANTED SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AND THAT THE EC SHOULD SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES; (C) ALL THE REST WERE SILENT. OUR SOURCES SAID THAT IT IS NOT THAT THE REST ARE KEEN ON AN AGREEMENT WITH IRAN, BUT THEY DO NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO OPPOSE SOMETHING WHICH IRAN MIGHT WANT. (SEPTTEL REPORTS A COMMISSION IMPRESSION THAT THE IRANIANS MAY BE TRYING TO USE THE EUROPEAN BORROWING FROM THE OIL PRODUCERS AS LEVERAGE FOR A TRADE ARRANGEMENT.)

3. THE OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSION WAS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. OUR SOURCES SAID THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE DISCUSSED AGAIN IN COREPER. HOWEVER, THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT TO TAKE THE ISSUE TO A COUNCIL MEETING WITH PRECISE QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS FOR POLITICAL GUIDANCE. THE IRISH SAID THE QUESTION WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE AGENDA FOR THE FEBRUARY 10 COUNCIL, AND IT MIGHT HAVE TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL MARCH. ONE SOURCE POINTED OUT THAT THE TIDE IS NOW RUNNING TOWARDS A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT, AND THAT WITH PETER SHORE NOW IN TEHRAN THE BRITISH WILL BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL. GREENWALD

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